RECORDS MANAGEMENT SURVEY REPORT
OF THE OFFICE OF CENTRAL REFERENCE

I PURPOSE

To prepare a records control schedule covering the disposition of all
records of the Office of Central Reference.

II BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

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At the request of the Office of Central Reference, a records management
survey was conducted by Mr. [redacted] of the Management Staff. The
survey began on 15 April 1956 and was completed on 17 April 1957. The
survey consisted of an item-by-item inventory of the records holdings
in each organizational element of the Office, and obtaining information
from responsible administrative and operation officials as to the use
and value of each category of records.

Based upon the value of the records placed on them by these officials,
evaluation criteria established by the National Archives, and precedents
established in other offices of the Agency for similar records, a pro-
posed schedule for the timely disposition of each record series was
prepared and submitted to each component of the Office for concurrence.
Proposed retention periods were adjusted until everyone was in complete
agreement and signatures of the organizational chiefs were obtained.
The schedule was then submitted to the Assistant Director for approval.

III APPLICATION OF APPROVED SCHEDULES

The OCR schedule, as approved by the Assistant Director, has been reviewed
by the Records Management Staff and is approved for full application of
the disposition instructions contained thereon except for destruction
action proposed on certain items. (See list of items attached to
schedule). Steps are being taken to obtain the necessary legal authoriza-
tion for the destruction of these excepted items whereupon you will be
notified immediately. However, it is pointed out that a schedule only
gives legal authority for the destruction and retirement of records
and all actions taken under this authority must conform with existing
security regulations of the Agency.

IV FINDINGS

Statistical information developed from the records control schedule shows
that the Office of Central Reference has records holdings totaling 27,209
cubic feet, categorized into 491 separate record series, and housed in
filing equipment having a replacement value of over $600,000. (See filing
equipment inventory attached as Exhibit No. 1.) This is significant in
that OCR records represent 45% of the total volume in the DD/I Area.
Therefore, the effectiveness of the records management program in the DD/I
Area is incumbent upon good records management practices in OCR. Of the
total OCR records, 22,926 cubic feet consists of library material and
register collections maintained primarily for servicing customers' requests.
The remaining 4,261 cubic feet of records are those accumulated in connec-
tion with administrating, collecting, and controlling these large collections.

The latter types of records fit well in established patterns for automatic cut-off, retirement, and disposal procedures as developed in the schedule. It is the other records, the largest by volume, where a records problem exists and where all techniques of good records management practices must be applied. It is also in this area where no precedent exists from which to draw on other Agencies' experiences and where reduction of volume by retirement or by micro-photography is basically determined by customer requirements.

V   ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the survey several problems arose which were considered pressing for immediate solution. In order to provide assistance to these areas when needed, other members of Records Management Staff and personnel from the Records Center were called on for help. With the full cooperation of OCR personnel we were able to accomplish the following:

1. **RECORDS RETIRED.** Prior to this survey, not all components of OCR had taken advantage of the facilities offered by the Records Center for housing their inactive files. In addition, large quantities of records acquired in groups from other Agencies were being stored in current files area pending time and manpower available to process these files into their own system. With the approval and cooperation of operating officials we were able to transfer a total of 1146 cubic feet of records to the Records Center. This was in addition to 1419 cubic feet of records that were retired to the Records Center by OCR components during the same period. Now, all Divisions and Registers of OCR are aware of the services available at the Records Center and are actively participating in a records retirement program. A suggested OCR issuance that would further assist personnel concerned with the retirement of records and their recall for current use is attached as Exhibit No. 2.

2. **RECORDS DESTROYED.** Many records are maintained by officials beyond their usefulness to the Agency because they are not aware that legal authority exists for their destruction or they are not aware that an office of record has been established elsewhere for the official record. Also they may often lack manpower to handle a large job of records destruction and keep up with their current work. With the approval of the appropriate officials we were able to destroy on the spot a total of 306 cubic feet of records. An amount equally as large is estimated to have been destroyed by operating personnel as a result of recommendations made during the inventory.

3. **FILING SYSTEMS INSTALLED.** Administrative files maintained at all organizational levels of OCR contain generally the same types of material. The files are usually maintained by Branch and Division secretaries and in systems devised on a day-to-day basis with no uniformity in arrange-ment. With the approval of appropriate officials we installed the Agency file system prescribed for this type of file in 9 locations in the Graphics Register, Special Register, and Machine Division, and trained personnel in their maintenance.

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4. **SHELF FILING INITIATED.** The introduction of new filing equipment which will house a larger volume of files with less floor space than conventional cabinets and safes is desirable not only from an economic standpoint but due to limitations on acquiring additional space. A member of our staff prepared a study on the use of shelf filing in Biographic Register for housing their Dossiers files. The plan was approved and open shelf filing equipment is being procured. This will consolidate all Dossiers into one filing area and in addition provide additional space for 24 months' expansion. The cost of the new equipment will not exceed the value of the cabinets that will be available for turn in. The use of shelf filing has also been approved on a test basis for installation in one Branch of the Industrial Register.

5. **SUPPLEMENTAL DISTRIBUTION STOCK LEVELS.** Adequate stocks of publications issued by OCR must be maintained to fill supplemental requests. Based on experience factors available at the Records Center on the number of requests they receive for OCR publications, stock levels have been established for Biographic Register and Graphics Register publications. As a result, stock levels established by these offices have authorized the destruction of 54 cubic feet of OCR publications at the Records Center and, in addition, have eliminated the need for maintaining extra copies of publications in current files area.

VI RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of our survey, other areas of records management were observed where possible improvements could be made. As a result of these observations and after a careful analysis of the schedule, the following recommendations are submitted for your consideration:

Recommendation No. 1 -- THAT THE RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE BE IMMEDIATELY APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE OFFICE.

The preparation of a records control schedule accomplishes little unless the disposition instructions which have been approved by all responsible officials of your office are implemented and adhered to down to the lowest echelon. Therefore, Records Officers and Administrators should use the schedules as a means of administrative control to obtain compliance with approved policies. The application of the schedule then becomes a prime factor in promoting an efficient and economical records disposition program. The benefits derived from an effective records disposition program are many. Substantial savings can be reflected in more economical use of office space and file equipment. In addition to monetary savings, application of the schedule insures preservation of records considered permanently valuable to the Office, and provides for orderly maintenance and management of files in current use.

Recommendation No. 2 - THAT THE RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE BE REVIEWED
ANNUALLY TO EFFECT CHANGES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THEIR CURRENT STATUS

The records of an organization reflect the function it performs and as these
functions change the schedule must be revised accordingly. New records are
often being created that are not covered on the schedule. Records
series which have been discontinued and either retired or destroyed should
be dropped from the schedule. Retention periods should be reduced on
certain items after experience has shown that items were over evaluated
on the initial schedule. Therefore, in order to maintain an active
records disposition program, a records control schedule must be reviewed
annually and brought up to date.

Recommendation No. 3 - THAT PROCEDURES BE ESTABLISHED FOR COLLECTING
AND COMPILING STATISTICAL INFORMATION TO MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
OCR RECORDS DISPOSITION PROGRAM.

In addition to the many intangible benefits derived from a records disposition
program there are substantial accomplishments that can be measured in dollar
savings. These savings are easily understood by the operating people as well
as the administrator and go a long way in promoting the program. In order
to measure the tangible benefits of the OCR program, procedures should
be established to collect and compile the following information annually:

    a. Volume (cu.ft.) of records on hand at beginning of reporting
period.

    b. Volume (cu.ft.) of records transferred to the Records Center
during reporting period.

    c. Volume (cu.ft.) of records destroyed during reporting period.

    d. Volume (cu.ft.) of records on hand at end of reporting period.

This information must be collected annually by the Management Staff for
use as an aid in measuring and reporting the effectiveness of the Agency
Records Management Program. A suggested memo for transmitting the schedules
to each component and establishing a reporting system is attached as
Exhibit No. 3.

Recommendation No. 4 - THAT THE AGENCY FILE SYSTEM OUTLINED IN HB 43-330-1
BE INSTALLED IN ALL ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUBJECT FILES THROUGHOUT THE OFFICE.

Within the Office of Central Reference, there are 37 separate subject and
administrative files maintained for the Chiefs of each organizational
element. These files are maintained and serviced by secretaries and
clerical personnel in the various chiefs' offices. The systems of filing
are varied, but for the most part, records are under some subject
arrangement. The Agency has adopted a subject numeric system for maintenance
of this type of file (See HB 43-330-1, "Handbook for Subject Filing") and
this file system has been installed in Graphics Register, Special Register,
Machine Division, and Administrative Staff. By extending this system
throughout the Office of Central Reference, benefits will accrue to
present as well as future administrators through such standardization.
It will provide a file guide usable by all personnel and lessen dependence
on a few file clerks to locate papers when they are needed. Intra-office
transfers (and in many cases inter-office transfers)

of administrative and clerical personnel will cause no time lost in learning the different file systems of each organization. All new clerical personnel (awaiting clearance) in the Interim Assignment Branch of the Personnel Office are given a training course in the subject numeric file system. The course is conducted by the Office of Training and covers five 40-minute periods. In addition, all new personnel in grades through GS-7 are given a brief course in subject numeric filing under the clerical orientation program. Members of this staff are available to assist in this program.

Recommendation No. 5 - THAT EMPLOYEE RECORD CARD, OF 4b, BE UTILIZED AT ALL ORGANIZATION LEVELS BELOW THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REPLACING THE INDIVIDUAL PERSONNEL FOLDERS.

Individual personnel folders are maintained at all organizational levels and duplicate the personnel folders maintained by the Administrative Staff. In addition, the employee's official personnel folder is maintained by the Personnel Office of the Agency. It is suggested that the personnel folders maintained by other than the Administrative Staff be discontinued and the use of Employee Record Card, OF 4b, be encouraged. The Employee Record Card is intended for use by operating officials as a basis for initiating personnel actions; recording personnel actions, training, and qualifications; and noting other information needed in the management of personnel. Agency Regulation 20-800 states that OF 4b is "the only supplementary record authorized by the Office of Personnel which may be established by operating components". The cards may be maintained in pocket type visible files and will occupy less filing space in the office.

Recommendation No. 6 - THAT THE REGISTERS CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A PROGRAM THAT WILL REDUCE FILE SPACE THROUGH MICROFILMING, RETIREMENT, AND UTILIZATION OF SPACE SAVING FILING EQUIPMENT.

The proof that a Register performs the function for which it was established is whether or not information or documents requested by a customer can be furnished. In order to meet the ever increasing requirements of the customers, new sources of information have been developed and the volume of files have continued to increase until all available floor space for further expansion is limited. The operating officials of the Registers are the first to admit that all documents in their files are not used and that some of them will never be used or needed by customers. Therefore, it is this group of never used documents and the seldom used documents that should be eliminated from the active collections and removed from current files area. Even if all inactive material could be removed from current files, the large volume of active files remaining will still present a space problem. It is in this area that the use of micro-photography and shelf filing would assist to reduce the space requirements for the Registers. In connection with this survey, as well as overall space requirements for the new Agency building, we have met with officials of Industrial Register to discuss informally a proposal we in Management Staff had prepared concerning the disposition of Industrial Card Files. (See Exhibit No. 4). Our proposal is only informal and was submitted to them as a point to start. Variations and detailed procedures should be discussed and worked out to the satisfaction of the Chief of the Register. We therefore, propose to work with each of the Registers towards the solution of their space problems.

Recommendation No. 7 - THAT THE INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTING PROCEDURE BE REAPPRAISED AND SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS BE PLACED ON SUBORDINATE COMPONENTS.

Throughout the Office of Central Reference, daily work reports are being prepared by most personnel. At each administrative level they are brought together, consolidated, and reported to the next higher level until they are all brought together in Operations Staff where the OCR monthly activity report is prepared. As a result of this reporting system, retained copies of feeder reports are being maintained at all levels of administration due to supplemental requests for information not included on the consolidated report. This requires initial work reports to be kept for excessive periods after the consolidated report has been forwarded to the next level. Therefore, all reporting requirements should be developed from the top downward. This will permit the destruction of feeder reports at each level of consolidation based on their administrative needs and prevent the retention of records on the remote possibility that they may be asked for.

Recommendation No. 8 - THAT OCR INITIATE A MEMORANDUM TO ALL OFFICES OF DD/I REQUESTING THAT BOOKS ON INDEFINITE LOAN FROM THE LIBRARY BE RETURNED IF NO LONGER NEEDED AS AN ACTIVE REFERENCE AID.

There are over 5,000 cubic feet of reference books in the various components of DD/I. This volume does not include those maintained by the OCR Library for loan purposes. Some of the books are on definite loan from the Library. The major portion, however, are those which have been procured by the Library for indefinite retention by the requesting officials. Over a period of years, some individuals have accumulated a large collection of library books. Many of these books maintained outside the Library have passed their usefulness as a daily reference aid and in many cases are never used at all. Also, these seldom used books could be furnished by the Library on request as easy as located by the requestor in his own library collection. If the results of this memo should prove successful in the DD/I area it is suggested that similar memos be initiated for the recall of inactive reference books from the other areas.